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THE EDITOR'S DIARY.

MONDAY, *June 17.*

The Summer Skies.

It was said of St. Francis that, had he been led upon the farthest starry way, past the bleakest regions of the heavens, to the dimmest and most distant star on the ragged edge of the universe, his imagination would but have found the face of a new friend. Not the loneliness of the way, but the possibility of a new, undreamed-of relation would have captured his imagination. There is a great deal to be got out of friendly relations with the universe. "Consider in the streets at nightfall the faces of men and women, when it is bad weather, what grace and sweetness they manifest," jotted down in his note-book, the subtlest, the most intellectual of painters, whose perceptions were a continual spring of knowledge and of joy. Stevenson tells us that he knew a woman once who said she never got over the interest, the humor and the strangeness of the eyebrows. What a companion that woman would have been!

The truth is that the world is packed full of things to see, things beautiful and things curious; and the sad fact is that most of us walk our course through the world without looking at anything, unless it be other folks' bonnets, or carpets, or curtains, or at ugly bits of paper floating down the street. It is actually true, believe it who can, that there are middle-aged people alive, with two perfectly sound, clear-sighted eyes, who do not know the ways or the motions or the aspects of the stars over their heads: and this despite the fact of their harmonious, orderly behavior, their punctual appearance in the sky at the proper season, and at the regular hours, and their splendid, majestic whirl in circles about the Polar Star. Such folks miss all the serenity and liberation of spirit that come from looking up in June to the fair, bright Spica, and realizing that she (it is impossible to explain why some stars are feminine and some are not, but it is

indubitably true) is speeding at white-heat, at an immeasurable distance, one of the most rarefied and tenuous bodies in the sky, while just above her lies a wonderful double star, Gamma Virgo, one part glowing red and the other green. Spica, herself, used to be called by the Arabs "the solitary one," because her position in the sky was apart from the other bright stars. The nearest very brilliant neighbor is Regulus, the handle star in the summer sickle. This is one of the most neighborly of stars, being visible for eight months in the year; it disappears about the end of August, but early in the November mornings it may be seen again.

The summer stars are not quite so brilliant and so dazzling as the winter ones, but they are more easily observed; and who fails to lie on his back on a hillside one or two clear nights in summer to track their courses, fails also to establish one of the pleasantest and friendliest of universal relationships. Richly but irregularly sown, over the great arching dome of heaven, the starry clusters move in orderly array; around the Polar Star swings the Little Dipper; the long, big Dragon with the triangular head winds gracefully between it and the Big Dipper, the largest utensil in the heavens, while low on the northwestern horizon Auriga is disappearing, and Vega, white and splendid, strikes the lyre in the east; Hercules, big and sprawling, stamps boldly on the head of the Dragon, while Boötes, with his brilliant star, Arcturus, goes a-hunting after the Bear. The hair of Berenice hangs just over the head of Virgo; and of this nebulous group it is told that, as the King Ptolemy Euergetes was starting out on a dangerous expedition against the Assyrians, his beautiful queen, Berenice, vowed to give her hair as a treasure to the gods if he were brought back in safety. And when the king marched home victorious the hair was placed in the temple of Aphrodite and mysteriously disappeared—which loss greatly grieved the ancient queen and her consort until they recognized the amber locks hanging in the sky above Virgo and below the handle of the Dipper.

Low on the widest circle of the horizon Hydra stretches, and Scorpio, with the great red star, Antares, twines himself along to eastward. Altogether, it is a fearsome company of warrior gentlemen and wild animals that prances across the summer skies, and who knows what miracles lie hidden beyond and behind the well-known groups? What shining streams of stars, what convoluted windings and intricate intertwining spirals of lumi-

nous bodies spin in regions spacious beyond our wildest conceptions of area and of distance? At any rate, while we can, let us grow, like St. Francis, to look for a friend in each of the wonderful bodies studding our arched covering: for, as the great and the subtle painter said again, "It is ordained that, to the ambitious who derive no satisfaction from the gifts of life and the beauty of the world, life shall be a cause of suffering, and they shall possess neither the profit nor the beauty of the world."

TUESDAY, *June 18.*

A Precursor of Whitman.

WHITMAN is usually looked upon as without forerunner or parallel. It is strange, then, to find in the recently discovered poet, Thomas Traherne, who died in 1674 and whose poems have only in the last six years been found and published, both thought and form strangely foreshadowing our democratic poet. Both poets, Traherne and Whitman, are preoccupied by the splendor and the beauty of the universe, by the sense that soul is a complete unity pervading the universe, and that essence and manifestation are inseparable. Both emphasize the sanctity of the body.

"Behold! the body includes and is the meaning—the main concern—and includes and is the Soul."

writes Whitman; and, in the same voice and with like accent, Traherne continues:

"Thou hast given me a body
Wherein the glory of Thy power shineth,

Within distinguished into useful parts,
Beautified without with many ornaments.

Limbs rarely poised

And made for Heaven:

Arteries filled

With celestial spirits:

Veins wherein blood floweth,

Refreshing all my flesh,

Like rivers:

Sinews fraught with the mystery

Of wonderful strength,

Stability,

Feeling."

And Whitman again sings:

“Within there runs blood,
The same old blood!
The same red-running blood!

.
If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred.”
.

Traherne has the cataloguing habit that Whitman has. He sings:

“Thou, Lord, hast made Thy servant a sociable creature, for which I
praise Thy name,
A lover of company, a delighter in equals;

.
Give me eyes
To see the beauty of that life and comfort
Wherewith those by their actions
Inspire the nations.

Their markets, Tillage, Courts of Judicature, Marriages, feasts and
assemblies, Navys, Armies,
Priests and Sabbaths, Trades and Business, the voice of the bride-
groom, Musical Instruments, the light of candles, and the grind-
ing of mills,

Are comfortable. O Lord, let them not sleep.
The riches of the land are all the materials of my felicity in their
hands:

They are my Factors, Substitutes and Stewards,
Second selves, who by trade and business animate my wealth,
Which else would be but dead and rust in my hands,—
And when I consider, O Lord, how they come unto Thy temples, fill
Thy courts and sing Thy praises,
O, how wonderful they then appear!

What stars,
Enflaming suns,
Enlarging seas.
Of Divine affection,
Confirming patterns,
Infusing influence,
Do I feel in these.”

This might easily be a page out of “Leaves of Grass.” Indeed, if it were inserted as stanza twelve of the “*Salut au Monde*,” it is doubtful if any one would have questioned the authorship. If one believed in the transmigration of souls, one might be persuaded that the soul which sang Traherne’s songs became impatient at the long hiding, and reincarnated first in Blake and once again in Whitman.